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ABSTRACT

In the teacher education field, each school, college, department of education (SCDE), school district, education professor, and professional teacher organization operates as an unrelated entity. There is a lack of any coherent direction to the reforms that are currently under consideration, and an absence of a unified voice for or about teacher education. Five basic questions which require consideration and agreement are: (1) What is teacher education? (2) Who is responsible for teacher education? (3) Who is the voice for teacher education? (4) Through what structure(s) can an agenda for the future of teacher education be attacked? and (5) What can be accomplished through unification? An appropriate line of action would be to communicate what teacher education is and is not, and within the parameter of what it is, to clarify the responsibilities of SCDEs. Teacher educators have been excluded from national invitational meetings called to discuss solutions to educational problems, possibly because there has not yet been articulated a clear, concise message as to what teacher education is and is not. The now fragmented teacher education associations could become united through a new Confederation of Teacher Educators which could provide leadership and speak to the public and state policymakers with one coherent voice. (JD)

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CHANGE WILL AMOUNT TO NAUGHT IN A LEADERSHIP VACUUM

A paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, San Antonio February, 1984.

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In 1977, Bruce Joyce and others described the degree of change occurring in teacher education institutions. According to this survey, "teaching programs are remarkably similar despite the enormous diversity in the institutional settings" (1977). Change reported by heads of SCDE's according to Ron Adams' 1983 survey, focused on raising standards for students entering teacher education programs; changing program components and structure; strengthening program evaluation; offering faculty/staff development activities; and coordinating with field-based educators and other academic disciplines on campus (Daly, forthcoming). If the change, as reported by Adams, is positive may we assume that some of our problems in education will be solved? Probably not. A more likely scenario will be that institution by institution, the reported change will amount to little more than tinkering. With our present course of action, the 21st century will find teacher education very similar to the way it was described by Bruce and others in 1977 - in my words - void of leadership.

The theme of this conference is "The 21st Century: Agenda for Teacher Education." In the words of Norene Daly, chair of the 1984 Annual Meeting Planning Committee, "the theme is based on the assumption that tinkering, adjustments, and limited changes in education will not accomplish the bold rethinking of the way teaching and learning should be provided in the 21st century."

My contention is that change in teacher education will amount to little more than "tinkering," if each institution, school district, education professor, and professional organization continues to operate as if each is an unrelated entity. It is well established in the change literature that problem solving of any magnitude requires the strong commitment and support from the top leadership.

Who is the "top leadership" in teacher education? What are the boundaries of teacher education? Teacher education is a term we commonly use, yet a term we rarely define. We assume a common interpretation. If the meaning of the term were readily apparent, its top leadership should be evident and its boundaries should be clear.

For me, this is not the case. Indeed, if the state of affairs in teacher education were less muddled, we may not need this theme for our conference.

The focus of my remarks will be to briefly characterize the "muddle" in which we find ourselves and then offer five fundamental questions which are basic to any attempt to move out of the "muddle." First, the "muddle."

Teacher education is in a "wind tunnel", bombarded from all directions with calls and recommendations for reform. While an exhaustic review of the conclusions and recommendations from the various commissions and the literature extends beyond the scope of this paper, a few examples will serve to characterize the muddle in which we find ourselves.

The National Commission on Excellence in Education reports that we have "been committing an act of unthinking, unilateria1 educational disarment" (1983, p. 5). The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching just completed a three-year analysis of public secondary education. Among the recommendations of the Carnegie Study are "that prospective teachers ought to

major in an academic subject rather than in education"....(Toch, 1983, p.1). In The American Teacher, it is reported that "the real crisis in teaching today is in who is entering the Profession" (Feistritzer, 1983, p. 58). Likewise, as reported in Profile of a Beginning Teacher, "an emerging consensus on how to improve the schools is that improvement must begin with upgrading teacher quality" (Scannell, et. al., 1983, p. 1).

Recommendations less broad in scope focus on the teacher preparation program itself. According to B.O. Smith and others, there is a major need to synthesize the knowledge base in teacher education (Smith, 1980, Anonymous Paper, 1982). "At the present time the knowledge base for teaching and teacher education is fragmented and unsynthesized. Second, even in the absence of a synthesized knowledge base, the evidence is overwhelming that such a base exists" (Anonymous Paper, 1982). The Profile of a Beginning Teacher is reported by its authors to be "an answer to the challenge to improve our schools through a better understanding of what teachers must be expected to know and be able to do in order to begin professional practice" (Scannell, et al, 1983, p. 1).

David Imig, Executive Director of AACTE, asserts that "the tasks of redefining the functions and form of teacher education - both preservice and inservice - and of building a more integrated system for delivery represent one of the greatest challenges of the future" (p. 3). In the same monograph, Imig goes on to say "The inadequate amount of time to teach pedagogy during the course of a four-year bachelor's program is one of the major problems confronting teacher education" (p. 12). Imig then lists nine issues for action on the topics of reducing the number of SCDEs; recruiting high quality and ethnically diverse students and faculty in teacher education; addressing teacher shortages; building more

rigorous programs; experimenting with structural reforms - such as extended programs; examining the appropriateness of a national curriculum for teacher education; placing greater emphasis on technological literacy; and analyzing and structuring inservice needs of teachers (Imig, pp. 17-18).

Fox, speaking on behalf of eight participating national organizations - AACTE, AERA, AFT, ATE, NEA, NSBA, and CCSSO - offers twenty challenges to teacher education and staff development (1983). Finally, dating back to 1976, Howsam and others in Educating a Profession challenged teacher education to earn public support by assisting teachers and schools to meet the demands on education" (Scannell, et. al, 1983, p. 1).

If these few examples of recommendations from the various commissions and the literature represent "the voice" of teacher education, then it is easy to see why in the 1981-82 conferences which resulted in the publication, Challenging How Teachers are Educated, school board representatives would say: "the public often meets teachers, but has little knowledge about how teachers are educated" (Fox, 1983, p. 11). We simply are not communicating an informed and coherent stand on teacher education.

Nash and Ducharme say that "the Commission (on Excellence in Education) apparently makes its recommendations on teacher education uninformed by the scholarship which clarifies the complexity of professional training and teacher competence" (1983, p. 43). Where is this clarity? One only needs to read Education Week on somewhat of a regular basis to appreciate the lack of any coherent direction to the reforms that are under current consideration. One also is struck by the rather conspicuous absence of a unified voice for or about teacher education in these debates. Have you asked yourself why?

In my mind teacher education is in a "wind tunnel." We are being bombarded from all direction with cries and suggestions for reform. We are being pulled in multiple directions simultaneously, walking - even running - faster to catch up, without a clear unified sense of where we are heading or how we will know when we get there.

It seems to me that in structuring the 21st century agenda for teacher education, we need to "step out of the wind tunnel" and ask ourselves some very fundamental questions. While I do not pretend to be clairvoyant in stating all of the questions, let alone the answers, if we could leave this conference with plans for developing answers to five basic questions, we will have made a major dent in our agenda for the 21st century. The questions are:

1. What is teacher education?
2. Who is responsible for teacher education?
3. Who is the voice of and for teacher education?
4. Through what structure(s) do we attack our agenda for the 21st century?
5. What do we hope to accomplish through unification?

1. <u>What is Teacher Education?</u>

Is teacher education exclusively concerned with the preparation of individuals for initial teaching positions? Or even, all certification programs? David Imig says "As the training arm of the teaching profession, teacher education is charged with developing the knowledge and skills bases for practice, with preparing personnel for entry to the profession, and with contributing to the on-going development of practicing professionals" (p.3). If we accept Imig's definition, then it seems we have three priorities:

1. Attempt to clarify the "fragmented and unsynthesized" knowledge base for teacher education.
2. Be sure our teacher preparation programs are consistent with that knowledge base.
3. Form some kind of structural alignment with elementary and secondary schools through which we can contribute to the on-going professional development of teachers.

If we accept a broader definition of teacher education, one that includes responsibility for improving the conditions in elementary and secondary schools in which teachers and administrators work, then our priorities for action must reflect a broader scope. In a forthcoming publication by an AACTE Task Force, entitled, Impact of Teacher Shortage and Surplus on Quality Issues in Teacher Education, the Task Force concluded that:

> "teacher education institutions are but one of many groups that influence change and directions in elementary and secondary schools. Despite what other groups may or may not do to improve teacher education, this task force believes that AACTE and SCDEs ought to take a much more visible role and assume increased responsibility for the quality of the teaching profession. This task force believes that the responsibility of SCDEs should extend beyond the

parameters of the students entering teacher education programs and the programs themselves.... The responsibility must encompass, among other things, the issues identified by the task force as needing attention to improve quality. These issues are:

-a declining student interest in teacher education;

-pending teaching shortage in most fields;

-surplus of teachers in art, physical education and social studies;

-recruitment and retention;

-student quality;

-questionable practices in the hiring of teachers;

-working conditions in elementary and secondary schools;

-improving teacher education programs;

-educating the public as to what can be done to improve quality in elementary and secondary schools; and

-forcing low quality teacher education institutions out of business" (Daly, et al. 1983, pp. 56-57).

If we accept this broader definition, then these kinds of issues become the priorities of our 21st century agenda.

2. Who is Responsible for Teacher Education?

From the two examples just cited, it should be clear that what SCDEs should be responsible for could vary significantly with the "meaning" that is assigned to teacher education. In Imig's definition of teacher education,

he states that the first two functions, i.e., specifying the knowledge base for teacher education and assuring consistency between our preparation programs and this knowledge base, are integral parts of higher education. The third, i.e., forming structural alliances with school districts through which to cooperate in the on-going professional development of teachers, is shared with local staff development programs (p. 3). If we accept Imig's definition of teacher education, then SCDEs have one set of responsibilities.

If, on the other hand, we adopt a broader definition of teacher education, similar to the 10 issues suggested by the AACTE Task Force (Daly, et al), then SCDEs would share responsibility for teacher education with at least the following groups: legislatures, various professional organizations, state departments of education, elementary and secondary schools, local school boards, accrediting agencies, testing agencies, and citizens.

The question, then, of who is responsible for teacher education is very much contingent upon the parameters we set for teacher education. For SCDEs simply to disclaim responsibility for this or that problem in schools, which we often do when challenged, is not going to gain us much headway. It seems that a more appropriate line of action would be to communicate what teacher education is and is not, and within the parameters of what it is, to describe the responsibilities of SCDEs.

3. Who is the Voice of and for Teacher Education?

Assuming that we reach answers to the first two questions that have been posed, who should speak for teacher education? It is noteworthy, I believe, that the membership on many of the recent commissions in which teacher education is criticized, did not include individuals from SCDEs. It is also

noteworthy that teacher educators have been conspicuously excluded in several national invitational meetings that have been called to discuss solutions to problems in elementary and secondary education and teacher education. Is it that the individuals appointing the commissions or calling the meetings believe we have nothing to contribute toward solving the problems? Is it that they don't know very much about teacher education? Is it that they believe we are the problem?

My answers to these questions would be mixed. I believe we have not been invited to participate in these commissions and meetings because we have not, as yet, articulated a clear, concise, message as to what teacher education is and is not. In response to A Nation At Risk, the Nation has been flooded with proposals from state legislators, governors, teachers' colleges and unions - proposals for testing, master-teacher classifications, salary incentives, teacher competency examinations, and the like. The situation was characterized beautifully in the October 5, 1983 issue of Education Week, with the statement: that trying to find direction in the various educational reforms currently in the Nation's spotlight is like standing in the middle of a busy train station, watching the trains depart, and wondering which train to get on. Without answering the question, who is the voice of and for teacher education, as well as the two questions previously posed, we will be at the sidelines watching others identify the train and watching others board that train. We will relegate ourselves to criticizing the train after the American people are already onboard.

4. Through What Structure(s) Do We Attack our Agenda for the 21st Century?

Closely related to who is the voice of and for teacher education is the

question: through what structure(s) do we attack our agenda for the 21st century? At the national level, we do not have a structure through which a unified position for teacher education can be taken. The American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education and the Association of Teacher Educators don't even meet together. The education deans further subdivide into three groups; the "private school" deans, the land grant deans, and the "TECSCU" deans. To some degree, the groups are in competition with one another.

Perhaps we should disband these separate organizations and merge into a single association. Depending upon agreements we reach with regard to "what is teacher education" we may want to broaden our membership. In the spirit of cooperation, unification, and strength, we also may want to disband, as separate entities, the state level affiliates of AACTE, AATE, and the various deans groups, and all get behind a new Confederation of Teacher Educators to make it work.

5. What Do We Hope to Accomplish Through Unification?

Finally, it seems appropriate to address the question of why. What do we hope to accomplish? Why can't we continue as we have, by and large, with each institution, school district, education professor, and professional organization operating as an unrelated entity?

Several possible goals come to mind, which probably are obvious by the previous questions asked in this paper. But this fifth question is important, I believe, because it forces us to think in terms of goals, planning, and priorities. Through unification would we, for example, hope to achieve:

. Citizenry support?

. Legislative support?

. Support within higher education?

. Credibility with the practicing arm of the profession?

. Improved teacher preparation programs?

. Better quality teachers?

. Better elementary and secondary schools?

The positions we take in answering the first four questions largely will determine what is possible to accomplish through unification. As a beginning goal, we may want to adopt the recommendation of the Teacher Education Conference Board, which is: to clearly define what is meant by teacher quality and confront power structures which advance impossible solutions to teacher quality issues (Daly, et al., forthcoming).

Summary

To this speaker, answering the five questions posed here are fundamental to "The 21st Century Agenda for teacher education":

1. What is teacher education?
2. Who is responsible for teacher education?
3. Who is the voice of and for teacher education?
4. Through what structure(s) do we attack our 21st century?
5. What do we hope to accomplish through unification?

Our nation has been flooded with reform proposals. The point is not that these proposals lack merit, but, rather they typify the fragmented state of affairs in teacher education.

Teacher education - as we define it and determine who has responsibility for it - must fill the leadership vacuum if any change in our educational system is to be meaningful. We must stay out of the "wind tunnel" and structure and attack our own agenda for the future. Our answers to the questions posed here should set our agenda. That agenda must be unified and spoken in a unified manner.

Using the "train" analogy mentioned earlier, such an agenda would place teacher education at the forefront. We no longer would be watching trains and wondering which one to pick. We would be designing, constructing, aiming, and driving a train we believe in because it is built from what we know about teacher education.

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